



Disaster News

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CASTAIC LOCAL ASSISTANCE CENTER TO BECOME SBA DISASTER CENTER

PASADENA, Calif. — To meet the current needs of the community, the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and State disaster recovery officials announced today that the Local Assistance Center in Castaic will remain open after February 19 as an SBA Disaster Center.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), FEMA and SBA opened the Local Disaster Assistance Center (LAC) to provide one-stop, face-to-face assistance and disaster information to individuals and businesses who suffered damage a result of the severe storms in December and January.

After registering for disaster assistance with FEMA, individuals and business owners were able to visit the center to obtain information about the types of disaster assistance available from agencies such as OES, FEMA, SBA and other agencies.

The Castaic LAC becomes an SBA Disaster Center on Monday, February 21 at 10 a.m. and will continue to be located at the Castaic Regional Sports Complex, 31230 Castaic Road in Castaic. It will be open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., until further notice.

At the Castaic SBA Disaster Center, SBA representatives will continue to provide individuals and business owners with face-to-face service in completing their loan applications, answering questions about SBA's loan program, and explaining how an SBA disaster loan can help pay for their disaster losses. Informational materials will also be available on FEMA's Individual and Household Program and the Hazard Mitigation Program.

Low interest disaster loans from SBA are available to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private, non-profit organizations. Disaster loans from SBA are the primary source of funds for repairing and rebuilding of disaster damaged private property.

Individuals may still register for federal and state disaster assistance by calling FEMA's toll-free registration number: 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or TTY 1-800-462-7585. The lines are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., daily.

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OES coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. The office is responsible for ensuring California's readiness to respond to and recover from natural, manmade and war-caused emergencies and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery efforts.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available to any individual without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, economic status, or disability.